

How often have we come to church in a state of spiritual dullness, only to leave the same way we came?

We enter the gathering of the saints, but our hearts are elsewhere or busy about worldly things and what we are doing later today; we have not (deliberately in our hearts) come to appear before God.

Do you believe that we ought to feel the presence of God on the Lord's Day? Should we be moved by the presence of God every time we meet as believers in Christ in our gatherings and fellowships? Every time the Word of God is opened and read and preached? Every time we pray. Shouldn't we have that expectation?

Or is meeting with God a foreign concept to us; do we even know what it's like to be in the powerful presence of the living God?

How do we know that the Spirit of God is PRESENT, active, and moving in our Lord's Day gatherings?

We cannot harness or control the Spirit of God, or command Him to show up (and work) in our meetings; but what we can and ought to consistently be doing is preparing ourselves to come into His Holy presence! If we REALLY and genuinely desire God's presence among us, we MUST gather together in such a way as to please Him. Hebrews 11:6, Acts 10:33

You see, there is something very wrong with us if we go from the place of worship (the place of God's presence) unmoved and having felt nothing.

When I say that we ought to be moved and that we ought to feel the presence of God, I'm not talking about something fleeting and spurious, I'm not talking about something temporary; something that's gone as soon as we leave the Lord's Day service!

I'm NOT talking about an emotional high conjured up by special effects or by loud or soft music, or some other fake man-made experience; I'm talking about being powerfully and permanently MOVED by the Spirit and Word of God. John 4:24, 1 Thessalonians 2:13

Throughout the Holy scriptures we read of expressions of praise and gladness and joy by the saints of old who ACTUALLY experienced God's Holy presence in their gatherings and personal devotions! Is that all gone today?

Are those Christian experiences no longer part of the Christian life? Is THAT now a foreign concept to our Christianity? Are we now relegated to sitting as lifeless stoics in our gatherings? Have we become so religiously formal that we can only listen to the preaching of God's Word like a boring classroom lecture from a textbook?

And when the preaching of God's Word is over, is it normal for us as God's people to have filled ourselves with knowledge about God, but we were not moved by God's Word; and we felt nothing of His Holy presence?

There's something wrong with that; if that's how it is with you, I hope you're not satisfied with coming and going from the church gathering like that!

I'm not talking about fake/manufactured joy human emotions; I'm talking about something REAL, GENUINE, HEAVEN SENT! Listen, we all say at times; God SPOKE TO ME in the preaching of His Word!

Listen, if God spoke personally to you, from His Word, THAT should POWERFULLY impact your life! And let me just say that when God's Word is being preached, the uncreated God is speaking personally to us; THAT should powerfully and permanently move us! This should change us!

How SHOULD that look? When someone has heard from God and was moved by God in His Word?

If you've heard from God, you will worship Him in reverence and godly fear, and you will obey what He has commanded you from His Word. If you've heard from God your heart will be changed and renewed; purified, made clean, sanctified; made tender! If you've sinned against God, you will be convicted and convinced of your sins, and you will repent and turn from them. And then, your heart will be filled joy and gladness and genuine praise to God.

I don't know about you, but I want to experience the felt presence of God in our Lord's Day gatherings; I want to be moved by the Word of God! But it will not be so here, if you and I don't FIRST experience the felt presence of God in our quiet/private times of devotion, worship, and prayer before our God.

Christian: You cannot live two separate lives; if you would revere God and hear from Him in our Lord's Day gatherings, then you must revere God in your life Monday - Saturday in your personal life! You cannot be cold and lifeless toward God outside of the gathering and expect to be warm and devoted to God within the gathering!

This morning consider in Psalm 100 how you may rightly enter into the presence of God, but also experience the presence of God.

Psalm 100: 1: Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands

This is a repeated stanza from Psalm 98:4; not a manufactured noise, and not necessarily the noise of musical instruments, but the joyful noise of praise; of voices of the saints of God from all over the world who rejoice in the God of their salvation!

The Psalmist calls upon God's people to make a joyful noise unto the LORD; which literally means to give a glad shout. This ought to be a real Christian experience in our lives. If we joy and rejoice in our God, this blessed noise of praise ought to come our mouths!

I think about the useless and worthless earthly reasons/times that I have lifted up my voice, for temporal and foolish things, O that we would lift up our voices in praise to our God! Habakkuk 3:17-18, Isaiah 61:10

Serve the LORD with gladness: come before His presence with singing. Gladness meaning with pleasure (V2)

If we would please God with our lives, we must serve the LORD with gladness in all that we do! If we're NOT serving the LORD with gladness in our everyday lives, (in our jobs, homes, in our circumstances) it's going to be very difficult or even impossible to turn a switch and to all of a sudden serve the Lord with gladness on the Lord's Day.

How you serve God EVERYDAY will impact how you will serve God on the Lord's Day? Ephesians 6:5-8, Colossians 3:22-23

Only then, will you be able to of a truth SAY:

was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the LORD, Psalm 84:1-4

No one wants to be served by an unwilling, discontented, or dissatisfied servant, much less God. If we would have God's presence, we must first be genuinely GLAD to come into His presence!

To serve the LORD without gladness of heart is to dishonor Him; it is to say that He is not worthy of our adoration, praise, and glad service.

Come before His presence with singing

We ought to always come into His presence with a song in our hearts! Psalm 30:4, 40:1-3

KNOW YE that the LORD HE IS GOD: it is He that hath made us, AND NOT WE OURSELVES; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. ENTER into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be THANKFUL unto Him, and BLESS His Name (V3-4):

Look at that short phrase in (V3): And NOT we ourselves. What is the Psalmist referring to? KNOW YE (or do you know) that YOU are not God, you did not create yourself, but God created you. Praise and thanks to God OUGHT to come forth from our hearts to God simply by virtue of the fact that God created us, and that we belong to Him. We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Psalm 46:10, 95:6-7

Come into God's presence KNOWING that He is God, not you!

Come into God's presence full of thankfulness and praise to Him.

Psalm 97:12, 145:1-4, Hebrews 13:15, Psalm 103:1-2, 104:1

For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations(V5)

God is NOT only the Almighty, Sovereign God, and Creator of the heavens and the earth; but He is GOOD to all of His creation. Christian, He is gracious and merciful, and full of love and compassion for His own people, His church.

Christian, if you can't see how GOOD the LORD IS in your life, you're blind! Count your blessings see what God has done in your life!

God's Word is ALWAYS perfectly relevant; precisely right in every way! His Word was true 1000 years ago, and it's still infallibly true today. It is through His Holy Word that you are able to enter into His real presence!

Is God's presence in our personal and corporate worship a foreign concept to our Christianity today in 2020?

We read of REAL experiences of the saints of old from the Word of God; I don't know about you, but I want to experience the presence of God in my personal devotions and in our church gatherings.

Psalm 63:1-5